

## Conserving Land for Fruit Production

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Mesa Land Trust




## MLT Accomplishments

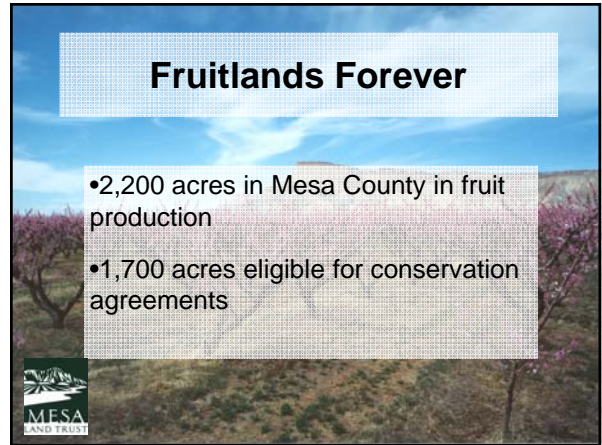
- The Land Trust has conserved more than 60,000 acres of land through 170 conservation easements.
- 1,082 acres in the East Grand Valley
- Protected land includes important wildlife habitat, productive agricultural lands, and scenic open space.




## Mesa Land Trust


**Mission:**

- To protect the ranches, farms, wildlife habitat, and scenic open spaces that define our community and enhance our quality of life - today and for future generations

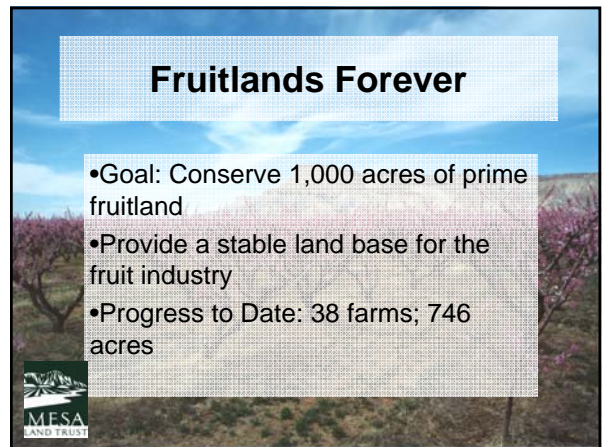
## Fruitlands Forever

- 2,200 acres in Mesa County in fruit production
- 1,700 acres eligible for conservation agreements





## Mesa Land Trust

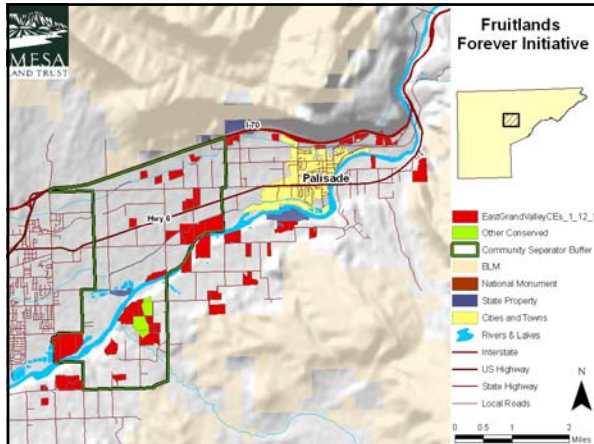
- *Founded in 1980 by Palisade fruit growers*
- *Three decades of effective partnerships with growers*
- *Committed to conserving a critical mass of prime farmland to sustain the industry*

## Fruitlands Forever

- **Goal:** Conserve 1,000 acres of prime fruitland
- **Provide** a stable land base for the fruit industry
- **Progress to Date:** 38 farms; 746 acres





## Conservation Easements Financial Incentives

- Transferable state tax credit
- Federal deductions
- Federal Estate tax benefits
- Limited opportunities to sell easements

## What is a Conservation Easement?

- Voluntary agreement that limits residential development and subdivision
- Landowners continue to own and manage their land and retain their property rights

## Why Convey a Conservation Easement?

- Consistent with agricultural operations
- Extract equity from property without selling land
- Diversify assets
- Helps ensure the future of the industry
  - Available land for production
  - Stabilizes the land base
  - Provides predictability/minimizes conflict

## What is a Conservation Easement?

- Agreements tailored to specific property and landowner's goals
- Provisions designed to meet needs of production agriculture
- Binds water to the land

## Cons of a Conservation Easement?

- May not be consistent with goals of landowner
- Lender may not subordinate loan on highly leveraged properties
- May reduce amount that can be borrowed against property
- Complicated, time-consuming, costly transactions

